

campaign

Nuclear weapons banned at last



CND Vice-President **Rebecca Johnson** has been involved in negotiations for a nuclear ban treaty since the start. Her report '*Nuclear Weapons are Banned: What does this mean for Britain?*' will be published soon. Here she writes about the entry into force of the treaty.

AMONGST the misery of Covid-19, we do have something to celebrate. From 22nd January 2021, the United Nations' Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) becomes international law.

Not only does the treaty clearly ban nuclear weapons use and threats, but also their production, deployment, stockpiling, possession and other activities that could enable anyone to acquire and use nuclear weapons. States Parties – and their residents – are forbidden to assist,

encourage or induce anyone to commit any actions that are prohibited by the treaty.

Eliminating nuclear weapons was the first UN resolution in 1946, as the world mourned the millions killed in previous wars. 'Ban the Bomb' we demanded when the Aldermaston marches started in the 1950s; when we joined with Japanese Hibakusha and indigenous people to halt nuclear weapons and testing in the 1960s; mobilised against more wars and corruption in the 1970s;

and disrupted nuclear bases to stop NATO and Soviet deployments in the 1980s. In the 1990s, the Cold War ended, and thousands of nuclear weapons were scrapped. Then, as military and climate destruction shadowed the new millennium, we – the peoples of the world – renewed our humanitarian disarmament campaigning to achieve this global nuclear ban.

On 7 July 2017, a ground-breaking process of multilateral negotiations delivered the TPNW to the UN General Assembly, where it was adopted immediately by 122 governments. Standing outside with the United States and France, UK representatives were instructed to dismiss the treaty and vow never to sign. This shameful decision needs to be reversed.

In anyone's hands, nuclear weapons carry dangerously high environmental, safety and financial costs. The detonation of one or a few nuclear weapons – even if unintended – will cause terrible humanitarian impacts and could unleash nuclear war.

They have been banned because the terrible risks and consequences mean there are no safe hands for these weapons of mass destruction.

If we don't want nuclear weapons to be used, we have to persuade our government to join the TPNW and work for its full implementation. Britain has a new opportunity to take the lead, halt its expensively useless Trident programme, and put our technical, legal and diplomatic skills to good use for global security.

The TPNW now joins the rules-based body of international laws and agreements. The UK needs to wake up and accede. We can make this happen by informing and mobilising Britain's people and institutions, by persuading MPs and working with local councils to adopt motions of support. As a first step, we must call on the government to attend and observe the meetings of states parties.

This is our treaty, and it's up to us to keep active until every remaining nuclear bomb is eliminated.

Despite the lockdown preventing us from marking the entry into force of the TPNW in person, CND has many digital activities planned in the coming days.

■ Find out more on CND's website
www.cnduk.org/tpnw

Spotlight

This month Abingdon Peace Group



We're now almost a year into the Covid-19 pandemic and most of us are now used to Zoom meetings! Many CND groups are now holding online organising meetings and special webinars, including Abingdon Peace Group who have arranged a virtual meeting with a guest speaker from Drone Wars UK later this month.

Contact the group on 01235 526265 or email sallyreynolds@btinternet.com. If you live locally, this could be a great opportunity to get involved.

And if your group would like support in arranging an online event, get in touch with enquiries@cnduk.org.

Give the next generation a future

Youth and Student CND co-convenor **Ellie Kinney** writes about why the CND section is getting involved with a campaign to secure the wellbeing of future generations.

“Since our leaders are behaving like children, we will have to take the responsibility they should have taken long ago.”

This line was spoken by teenage climate campaigner Greta Thunberg back in December 2018 to the United Nations Climate Change Conference. It’s difficult to comprehend quite how much the world has changed since Thunberg delivered this speech but there is one reliable trend – our leaders are letting young people down. Between politicians ignoring the impact that climate change will have on our futures and turning schools into political battlefields during the coronavirus pandemic, it’s unsurprising that the resurgence youth activism isn’t going away.

Whilst young people have been taking to the streets and social media, what is being done in Westminster to challenge the lack of responsibility being shown?

Caroline Lucas MP, Chair of Parliamentary CND, alongside *Big Issue* founder Lord John Bird, have been working to introduce the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill to

parliament. Inspired by the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act passed by the Welsh Assembly in 2015, the bill hopes to put long-term thinking at the heart of decision-making by introducing a dedicated Commissioner to review the impact policies have on the economic, cultural, social, and environmental well-being of young people and future generations yet to come.

It’s undeniable that this will force a conversation on climate change, but what about nuclear disarmament? At the height of the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, the nation is feeling the effects of irresponsible economic policies, with years of prioritising warfare over fully funding the NHS.

In terms of our social impact on the global community, the UK is already getting a taste of how it feels to be a national embarrassment through Prime

Minister Boris Johnson’s handling of the pandemic. Add to that the shame of the UK’s refusal to engage with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which is set to become international law this month, and it’s clear that we risk leaving behind a country that is detached from our international counterparts.

Finally, the government’s lack of consideration of the environmental impact of nuclear weapons is a truly huge irresponsibility. Through our commitment to nuclear weapons, we are risking not giving future generations a future at all – mutually assured destruction is no gift to our grandchildren.

Should the bill pass, this could provide a vital opportunity to hold our government accountable for the risks it is taking with our future.

Join a webinar arranged by Youth and Student CND and the Big Issue on **28th January** from 7-8pm to find out how the Future Generations Bill could play a part in creating a more peaceful world.

Due to the ongoing coronavirus situation, CND nationally and at a local level continues to arrange mainly virtual events. Keep checking our website and social media accounts.

How does the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons stand up legally?

CND webinar

16 January at 5pm.
■ To register contact: information@cnduk.org

Abingdon Peace Group meeting with Drone Wars

UK guest speaker.

19 January 8pm.

■ To register contact: 01235 526265 or sallyreynolds@btinternet.com

What now? Foreign Policy under Biden

London CND conference

24 January 4pm.

■ To register contact: info@londoncnd.org

International Day of Action on Yemen

25 January

■ For more info contact: enquiries@cnduk.org

Wellbeing for Future Generations: building a more peaceful world

Youth and Student CND event, 7pm

28 January, via Zoom.

■ To register contact: information@cnduk.org

Faringdon Peace Group meeting

3 February 7:30pm

■ To register contact: 01367 710308 or steve.jenny@hotmail.com

Yorkshire CND AGM

20 February 5pm

■ To register contact: 01274 730795 or info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk

Temporary office closure

Please note that due to the new national lockdown, the CND national office in London is temporarily closed while the new restrictions apply.

All staff are still working remotely, and all should be able to get back to you on email.

To contact the office staff, please email enquiries@cnduk.org or phone 07891 870732 and you will be re-directed to the right person.

The office closure means that we will be unable to send materials or shop orders. We will also not be receiving post, so please be patient if you are awaiting acknowledgement of a donation made by post.

If you have sent a postal donation in response to our newspaper advert appeal, and would still like your name to be included, then please contact fundraiser@cnduk.org to let us know how you'd like your name to appear.

Meet the staff

This month:

Kate Hudson, General Secretary

"Being General Secretary is a full-on job! Sometimes it's 24/7 – you never know when a war might begin, a nuclear accident happen, or a political leader do something totally dangerous and destructive. My role is to oversee and develop our work in whatever political context we are facing – to raise our campaigning priorities and advance the cause of nuclear disarmament at every opportunity. Usually the public face of CND, I also manage the staff in the national office, have final sight of all our output, and keep in close touch with the elected officers. Never a dull moment!"

